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NAIVASHA ACCORD KEY TO SUDAN PEACE, U.S. ENVOY SAYS

Ambassadors Danforth, Hall discuss Sudan situation

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations
Correspondent

New York -- The two-pronged approach of placing international monitors in Darfur and pressing Khartoum and the rebels to complete a peace agreement is the most likely way to end the terrible tragedy of Sudan, U.S. Ambassador John Danforth said December 2.

Danforth, the chief U.S. envoy to the United Nations, said that imposing international sanctions on the government of Sudan "is not a real option."

"While the United States itself has comprehensive sanctions against the Government of Sudan, the Security Council is not going to do that," the ambassador said.

Danforth pointed out that, in their two resolutions on Sudan, Security Council members mentioned considering the possibility of "measures," refraining from using the term "sanctions" because that would have been vetoed.

China, he said, has a "serious economic relationship" with Sudan with respect to oil production. "China is not going to impose sanctions, not going to be a party to that."

“Even if they were approved,” Danforth said, “would sanctions work? The U.S. unilateral sanctions have certainly not influenced the behavior of Sudan.”

The ambassador added that even though the two Security Council resolutions “have certainly pointed the finger at the Government of Sudan -- and they deserve to have the finger pointed at them -- nobody’s hands are clean. The government and the rebels in Darfur have each been complicit in creating this terrible tragedy, and it’s time to end it.”

What can be done, the ambassador said, is establishment of an outside presence, especially the African Union (AU) monitors in Darfur, coupled with the successful conclusion of the North-South peace process between the government of Sudan and the SPLM (Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army), most often referred to as the Naivasha process.

“The African Union, plus the humanitarian workers’ presence, plus any other presence we can think of is very important for Darfur as a moderating influence on the terrible tragedy there,” Danforth said.

The ambassador pointed out that the U.N. special envoy said he would like to see the African Union presence doubled from the current authorized level of 3,500, and Sudan has indicated that it would accept the increased number of AU monitors.

Speaking in New York during a joint press conference with U.S. Ambassador Tony Hall, who participated via digital videoconference from Rome, Danforth said that the completion of the Naivasha peace accords, expected to be signed by December 31, will help end the humanitarian tragedy and unrest in Darfur.

“There is a very strong relationship between Darfur and the so-called North-South conflict,” the ambassador said. “The reason is that if there is a peace agreement between the SPLM and the Government of Sudan, it provides the framework for a federal system which is able to incorporate into one country diverse interests. Therefore, the framework for a political settlement in the Darfur area is provided should there be peace agreement between the North and South.”

Danforth was president of the Security Council during the month of November when the council went to Nairobi to hold a two-day session on Sudan, only the fourth time in the council’s history that it has met outside

the United States. The council witnessed the signing by Khartoum and the SPLM of a memorandum of understanding to complete the peace agreement by the end of 2004. The Security Council also passed a resolution outlining the support and commitments the international community is ready to give make to Sudan once the agreement is finalized.

While the council was in Nairobi, Ambassador Hall, the U.S. representative to the U.N. agencies for food and agriculture -- the World Food Program (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) -- was in Libya observing the opening of a third corridor for the delivery of food to Darfur.

Hall called the opening of the new route through Libya a “truly historic humanitarian event” during which trucks hired by the WFP and filled with U.S. food made their way into Chad to feed Darfur refugees.

“It is significant in that one of the problems in Darfur is that it’s very difficult to reach,” Hall said. “There were only two ways -- through Port Sudan and through Cameroon -- but the distances are great, very difficult, sometimes treacherous, and in the rainy season the trucks get bogged down.”

Congratulating Libya for its cooperation, the ambassador said, “The opening of the third corridor will feed several hundred thousand people, especially in Chad and eventually Sudan.”

Hall said that when he visited Darfur after visiting Libya, he found an atmosphere of fear.

The refugees “live in fear. They don’t trust the government; they don’t trust the police; they don’t trust the Jingaweit; they don’t necessarily trust the rebels,” he said. “They are not going to leave those camps until they feel that they have some security.”

Another major problem is that if the refugees and displaced do not return to their farms in the next four or five months to plant crops, there won’t be a harvest next year, Hall said. “If there is no harvest we will have these people [needing food aid] at least two more years,” he said.

U.S. URGES NON-VIOLENT, LEGAL STEPS TO END UKRAINE CRISIS

Minikes says new election could be a solution, but only if fairly conducted

Reiterating calls for a nonviolent response to Ukraine's election crisis, the United States told the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that a new election could provide a solution, but only if it meets international standards.

Ambassador Stephan Minikes, U.S. permanent representative to the OSCE, called on Ukrainian authorities December 2 not to use force against peaceful protesters and urged demonstrators to maintain "a peaceful and orderly exercise of their political rights."

He also stressed the importance of avoiding "any actions or rhetoric that call into question Ukraine's territorial integrity."

Minikes thanked European mediators for their efforts and encouraged OSCE states to prepare to supply observers should another election round be held in Ukraine.

He warned that "a non-democratic outcome of the current crisis would have serious consequences for the United States' relationship with Ukraine and for our relationship with those individual officials responsible for election fraud."

Following is the text of Minikes' remarks:

United States Mission to the OSCE
Statement on Ukraine's Political Crisis
As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 2, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As Secretary of State Colin Powell stated on November 24, the United States cannot accept the results of the November 21 balloting of the Ukrainian presidential election as legitimate because of the extensive and credible reports of fraud and abuse.

The United States reiterates its call to all parties in Ukraine to continue to pursue legal and political options that lead to an outcome reflecting the genuine will of the Ukrainian people.

A non-violent solution must be found for the current crisis. We note the November 28 commitment by Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, which includes President Kuchma, that force will not be used against peaceful protesters.

It is the duty of every Government to defend the right of citizens to engage in free, peaceful political expression and assembly.

The United States urges demonstrators to maintain their commitment to a peaceful and orderly exercise of their political rights.

It is also critically important that Ukrainian citizens, political leaders and government representatives avoid any actions or rhetoric that call into question Ukraine's territorial integrity.

The United States fully supports the efforts of European mediators - including OSCE Secretary General Kubis, EU High Representative Solana, Polish President Kwasniewski and Lithuanian President Adamkus. Both the government and opposition should engage these mediators in good faith.

We are pleased that the mediators appear to have had success yesterday in reviving talks between the Ukrainian parties.

The United States urges the OSCE Election Observation Mission to continue to monitor and to report on post-election processes in Ukraine.

We welcome and encourage participating States to heed ODIHR Director Ambassador Strohal's November 30 letter calling on participating States to prepare for supplying observers should another election round be held in Ukraine.

A third round of the Ukrainian election could be a way out of the crisis, but only if it occurs under conditions that meet international standards.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, we welcome the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's confirmation that the Ukrainian invitation to the OSCE to observe the presidential election is valid for any further rounds.

We support the OSCE Election Observation Mission's recommendations to the Ukrainian Government in its November 30 update on facilitating observation of a

potential additional round. Accreditations for observers to either of the first two rounds should remain valid; the Ukrainian government should be prepared to issue visas to observers upon their arrival in Ukraine; and requests for new accreditations should be allowed as close as possible to election day.

We share the concerns expressed by the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media in his November 30 press release. It is important that Mr. Haraszi remain engaged on the issue of media freedom in Ukraine at this very, very critical time.

The United States will continue to follow events in Ukraine closely, and reiterates that a non-democratic outcome of the current crisis would have serious consequences for the United States' relationship with Ukraine and for our relationship with those individual officials responsible for election fraud.

We commend the Ukrainian people for peacefully insisting on their democratic rights.

The United States encourages all participating States to continue to support Ukrainian democracy, Ukrainian stability and Ukrainian territorial integrity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

U.S., IRAQI OFFICIALS CAUTION AGAINST IRAQI ELECTION DELAY

Officials cite political, legal, operational reasons for adhering to schedule

By David Shelby

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. government believes that Iraqi elections should be held as scheduled on January 30, 2005, in spite of the difficulties involved, according to the State Department's Iraq Coordinator Ronald Schlicher.

The United States respects the opinions of the 17 political groups that have called for a delay of the elections but believes that the Iraqi government and the elections commission should work to address the technical concerns raised by these groups rather than accept a delay, Schlicher said at a December 1 briefing at the U.S.

Institute of Peace.

The primary reason he offered for moving ahead with elections as scheduled was that a delay -- even for legitimate political or technical reasons -- might be viewed as a moral victory for those who seek to derail the elections process altogether.

Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, Feisal al-Istrabadi, offered additional reasons for adhering to the established date.

"Iraq is constitutionally committed -- if you'll pardon the expression -- to holding elections not later than the 31st of January," he said, referring to the provisions of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) which call for national elections no later than January 31, 2005.

He said that there are no provisions for amending or changing the TAL. He added that the TAL authorizes the independent Iraqi Elections Commission to set the date and said that the interim Iraqi government has no power to interfere in that decision.

The ambassador also said that U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 endorses the elections schedule that was established in the TAL, making the election date a matter of international law.

Nevertheless, al-Istrabadi does not dismiss the opinions of those who are calling for a delay.

"Above all, this group reminds us that it is not merely elections for the sake of elections that are being held," he said. "Rather, at the very least and in the parlance of the United Nations, the elections must be reasonably credible."

He said that those who propose a delay must establish that it would significantly enhance the credibility of the elections and the entire political process. However, al-Istrabadi remained skeptical that the proponents of delay could make a convincing case on this point.

The ambassador said that the Iraqis have met every goal for self-governance set for them so far and cautioned that a delay at this point might embolden "an enemy determined to prevent any hint of progress and stability in Iraq, and quite prepared to use the most barbaric terrorist tactics, including the wholesale massacre of Iraqi civilian children, women and men to achieve their nihilistic goals."

He added, "Those advocating delay have a burden, it seems to me, of establishing that delaying elections will not constitute a victory -- moral or otherwise -- for terrorists whose evident goal is to delay or cancel elections."

Jeff Fischer, of the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), said that there are operational reasons for moving ahead as scheduled, in addition to the legal and political reasons offered by the other speakers.

Fischer said that there are 6,000 people currently engaged in registering Iraqi voters based on the U.N. Oil-for-Food Program's rations database. He added that more than 200 political entities have applied for certification, filing candidate lists with a total of more than 4,000 names.

He also said that provisions are being made to allow Iraqi expatriates in 14 other countries to cast ballots.

Responding to a question about the technical possibility of holding elections on January 30, 2005, Fischer said, "I think the process and the viability of the process is speaking for itself right now."

He noted that the administrative infrastructure is in place in the field and that a regulatory framework has been established. He also mentioned the participation of Iraqi staff and the availability of international technical and financial assistance.

"I think if you look at the practical indicators on paper or in the field, you will see a process taking shape," he said.

RESEARCH USES NUCLEAR ENERGY TO PRODUCE HYDROGEN FROM WATER

New technology promises higher hydrogen production efficiencies

Researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) have demonstrated the feasibility of using nuclear energy to efficiently produce hydrogen from water.

In a November 30 DOE press release, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said, "Because of the need to develop new energy sources in an environmentally sound way,

the president and our administration recognize that the benefits of hydrogen technologies are too great to ignore. This major breakthrough signals that we are systematically achieving our hydrogen goals."

DOE is exploring clean hydrogen production technologies using fossil, nuclear and renewable resources to reduce dependence on imported petroleum, diversify energy resources, and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The work conducted at DOE's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) involves high-temperature electrolysis, that is, passing electricity through water. This process improves on conventional electrolysis by using heat - such as from an advanced nuclear reactor - to reduce the amount of electricity needed to split water into hydrogen and oxygen.

Such a high-temperature system could be substantially more efficient than conventional electrolysis.

Information on advanced nuclear energy concepts is available at <http://gen-iv.ne.doe.gov/>

Information about electrolyzers is available at http://www.eere.energy.gov/hydrogenandfuelcells/production/technology_areas.html - electro

Text of the DOE press release follows:

U.S. Department of Energy
Press release, November 30, 2004

DOE Researchers Demonstrate Feasibility of Efficient Hydrogen Production from Nuclear Energy

WASHINGTON, DC - In a major step toward achieving President George W. Bush's goal of ensuring America's energy security through innovative technologies, researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) and Ceramtec, Inc. of Salt Lake City, Utah have demonstrated the feasibility of using nuclear energy to efficiently produce hydrogen from water.

"With America's growing demand for oil, also comes a host of environmental challenges. Because of the need to develop new energy sources in an environmentally sound way, the President and our Administration recognize that the benefits of hydrogen technologies are too

great to ignore. This major breakthrough signals that we are systematically achieving our hydrogen goals,” Secretary Abraham said.

Using hydrogen to fuel our economy can reduce dependence on imported petroleum, diversify energy resources, and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. To this end, the Department of Energy is actively exploring clean hydrogen production technologies using fossil, nuclear and renewable resources to revolutionize the way we power our Nation’s cars, homes and businesses.

This achievement demonstrates high-temperature electrolysis which utilizes heat to decrease electricity needed for splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen. Instead of conventional electrolysis, which uses only electric current to separate hydrogen from water, high-temperature electrolysis enhances the efficiency of the process by adding substantial external heat - such as high-temperature steam from an advanced nuclear reactor system. Such a high-temperature system has the potential to achieve overall hydrogen production efficiencies in the 45 to 50 percent range, compared to approximately 30 percent for conventional electrolysis. Added benefits of the nuclear energy source include the avoidance of both greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants.

The researchers have shown that hydrogen can be produced at temperatures and pressures suitable for integration with the new Generation IV nuclear reactor design being developed by the Department.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham stated, “The Generation IV nuclear technologies will take us to the next level in terms of efficiency, reliability, and safety. Coupling high temperature electrolyzer technology with the Gen IV reactors provides another pathway to produce hydrogen for powering future fuel cell vehicles.” Fuel cell vehicles running on hydrogen produce no pollutants or carbon emissions.

Improvements in solid oxide electrolyzer design made by Ceramtec, Inc. will enable a 3-fold decrease in equipment size allowing greatly reduced capital costs. INEEL developed the system concept design and performed the feasibility testing.

This demonstration follows Secretary Abraham’s recent announcement of a \$2 million grant to Ceramtec who is teamed with INEEL, University of Washington, and Hoeganaes Corporation in Riverton, New Jersey. The team will continue to work remaining challenges to

lower costs, increase materials durability and improve efficiency of the solid oxide electrolyzer technology.

This development is a major step towards the hydrogen economy and realizing the President’s vision described in his 2003 State of the Union Address that “the first car driven by a child born today could be powered by hydrogen, and pollution-free.”

For more information on advanced nuclear energy concepts, see <http://gen-iv.ne.doe.gov/>.

For more information on electrolyzers, see http://www.eere.energy.gov/hydrogenandfuelcells/production/technology_areas.html - electro

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